

Message Text

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TAGS: MARR, MILI, TH

SUBJ: PRESS REPORT: U.S. RESIDUAL IN THAILAND

1. (U) WEEKLY THAI-LANGUAGE CHATURAT MAGAZINE CARRIES FOLLOWING ARTICLE.

2. BEGIN TEXT. AN INFORMATION SOURCE OF CHATURAT REPORTED THAT RECENTLY (LAST WEEK), THE THAI GOVERNMENT NOTIFIED THE U.S. AUTHORITIES THAT IF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WANTS TO KEEP AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THAILAND, IT MUST MAKE A NEW BARGAIN REGARDING THE STATUS OF THE AMERICAN FORCES THAT WILL STAY ON. PARA IT IS KNOWN AMONG THAI OFFICIALS AND U.S OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON THAT THE REMAINING AMERICAN FORCES WILL NOT ENTIRELY LEAVE THAILAND BY THE TIME LIMIT SET BY THE THAI GOVERNMENT FOR THE ENTIRE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN FORCES. THIS BELIEF IS THE GUESS OF BOTH SIDES. THE AMERICAN SIDE HAS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED TO THE THAI SIDE THAT IT WANTS TO KEEP THE FACILITIES BELONGING TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY (NSA) AND THE RIGHT TO CONTINUE USING UTAPAO AIRFIELD. IN ADDITION, IT WILL KEEP ITS ARSENAL AT KORAT. PARA NSA'S MAIN INSTRUMENT IN THAILAND IS CAMP RAMASUN IN UDORN, WHICH IS THE UNITED STATES' VITAL STATION

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FOR RECEIVING AND TRANSMITTING MILITARY INTELLIGENCE IN ASIA.

THE UNITED STATES WANTS TO KEEP THE MENTIONED FACILITIES IN THAILAND BECAUSE IF WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN FORCES IS TO BE MADE ON SCHEDULE, THERE WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT LOOPHOLE IN THE U.S. MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK. PARA REGARDING UTAPAO, WHAT NECESSITATES THE U.S. TO CONTINUE USING THIS BASE IS THAT IT WANTS TO EXPAND ITS BASE ON DIEGO GARCIA ISLAND IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND AIR LOGISTICS BETWEEN AMERICAN BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES, REFUELING AT A SPOT BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS AND DIEGO GARCIA IS VERY NECESSARY. UTAPAO IS ABOUT HALF THE DISTANCE, THUS BEING MOST SUITABLE. PARA THE SAME SOURCE REPORTED THAT THIS NEED OF THE U.S. WAS NOT NEGOTIATED UNTIL THE THAI FOREIGN MINISTER WENT TO MEET DR. KISSINGER IN WASHINGTON ON NOVEMBER 23. KISSINGER AGREED TO TURN OVER THE THREE NSA OPERATION BASES TO THAILAND, BUT THERE MUST BE OTHER TALKS ON DETAILS BETWEEN THAI AND U.S. AUTHORITIES IN BANGKOK. PARA IT IS NOTED THAT CAMP RAMASUN IS AN OPERATION BASE WHICH DIFFERS FROM OTHER AMERICAN BASES IN THAILAND. OTHER MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AND AIR BASES UTILIZED BY THE U.S. BELONG TO THAILAND, ACCORDING TO THE LAW AND REALITY, BECAUSE THERE IS AGREEMENT THAT CAMP OR BASE COMMANDERS ARE THAI MILITARY OFFICERS, AND SUCH BASES ARE AVAILABLE TO THE U.S. ONLY ON TEMPORARY BORROWING BASIS, BUT REGARDING CAMP RAMASUN AND THE OTHER TWO CAMPS, THERE IS A SPECIAL AGREEMENT, WHICH IS DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS. PARA CHATURAT'S INFORMANT IN THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE REPORTED THAT THE THAI ARMED FORCES SUPREME COMMAND HEADQUARTERS HAS AN AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE WHICH IS KNOWN AS THE RADIO FIELD RESEARCH AGREEMENT. UNDER THIS AGREEMENT, THE THAI SIDE ALLOWS THE U.S. TO HAVE THE RIGHT TO USE THOSE OPERATION BASES UNTIL IT DOES NOT WANT TO USE THEM ANY MORE, WHICH IS TANTAMOUNT TO AGREEING THAT THEY BELONG TO THE U.S. UNTIL THEY ARE RETURNED TO THE THAI GOVERNMENT REGARDLESS OF THE AGREEMENT THAT THE THAI ARMED FORCES IS THEIR OWNER BY LAW. PARA IT IS UNDERSTOOD IN WASHINGTON THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT STILL WANTS CONTINUED U.S. ASSISTANCE. THEREFORE, WHATEVER THE BARGAIN IN DETAIL MAY BE, THE UNITED STATES WILL CERTAINLY BE ABLE TO KEEP PART OF ITS COMBAT FORCES AND TO CONTINUE TO USE THOSE FACILITIES IN THAILAND. PARA "A NEW THAI-U.S. AGREEMENT WHICH THE THAI SIDE WILL PROPOSE WILL BE ONE THAT WOULD BE USED AS THE RULE IN PLACE OF OTHER AGREEMENTS ALREADY CONCLUDED WITH

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THE UNITED STATES, "THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOLD CHATURAT. PARA "I WON'T MENTION THE PLACE AND THE NUMBER OF TROOPS FOR THE NEW BARGAIN BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THAILAND, BUT THE PRINCIPLE IS THAT EVERY PLACE MUST BELONG TO THAILAND. THE USE OF UTAPAO WILL END ON MARCH 20. CONTINUED AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THAILAND MUST BE USEFUL TO US," HE ADDED. PARA OUR INFORMANT IN WASHINGTON REPORTED FURTHER THAT THIS PROPOSAL OF THE THAI SIDE IS THE FIRST DEALING WITH

AGREEMENT IN DETAIL, BECAUSE SUCH DETAILS HAVE NEVER BEEN WORKED OUT REGARDING AMERICAN PRESENCE HERE. ANOTHER PRINCIPLE PROPOSED BY THE THAI SIDE IS THAT IN KEEPING ITS MEN IN THAILAND, THE UNITED STATES MUST NOT INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THAILAND'S NEIGHBORS WITHOUT GAINING PERMISSION FROM THE THAI SIDE'S. PARA WHAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WILL DO WITH THE THAI SIDE'S PROPOSAL IS A MATTER TO WAIT AND SEE. WHILE REPORTS, BOTH TRUE AND FALSE, ABOUT ATTACKS FROM THE BORDER WITH OUR NEIGHBORS POUR FORTH INTO BANGKOK EVERY DAY, IF THIS NEW PROPOSAL IS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE UNITED STATES, WE MUST WATCH TO SEE WHAT WILL HAPPEN. END TEXT.

3. (U) THAI-LANGUAGE PRESS HAS BEGUN PICKING UP SUBSTANCE OF THE CHATURAT REPORT. DAILY PRACHATIPATAI QUOTED IT FEB. 10.

4. (C) COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDER SECRETARY ANAN PANYARACHUM WAS PROBABLY SOURCE OF ALL INFORMATION IN THE REPORT, DESPITE REFERENCE TO CHATURAT'S "INFORMANTS IN WASHINGTON." ANAN IS GETTING BEFORE THAI PUBLIC A PERCEPTION THAT RTG TAKING TOUGH NATIONALISTIC STANCE IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH USG, STRIKING A "NEW" BARGAIN THAT PUTS AMERICANS UNDER TIGHT RTG CONTROL WHILE INSURING CONTINUED U.S. ASSISTANCE AT A TIME WHEN REPORTS OF "ATTACKS FROM THE BORDER WITH OUR NEIGHBORS POUR FORTH INTO BANGKOK EVERY DAY." THIS IS FIRST TIME WE HAVE SEEN, OR HEARD, FLAT STATEMENT THAT "THE USE OF UTAPAO WILL END ON MARCH 20." IT IS PROBABLY MISQUOTATION, BUT WE WILL NAIL THIS POINT DOWN WITH ANAN AT EARLY OPPROTUNITY. WHITEHOUSE

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